ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of a four-year study examining business students' perceptions of academic integrity and the role of technology in e-learning. This study is an extension of previous research on academic integrity in the online environment (Cole, Shelley & Swartz, 2013; Cole & Swartz, 2013; Shelley, Cole & Swartz, 2010). Of the 553 students who participated in the study, more than a third did not believe that academic integrity applied equally online and in the classroom. Independent-samples t-tests showed statistically significant differences based on gender, but not by age group or level of study. There were 200 responses to what made the two learning environments different. Students pointed to the “real world” where accessing all available resources to solve a problem was the norm, suggesting that instructors should recognize that and adapt their expectations of what is and is not acceptable behavior in the courses they teach.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, there have been a number of studies of academic dishonesty (Ghaffari, 2009; McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001), the prevalence of plagiarism in academia (Thomas & Sassi, 2011) and the frustration instructors and administrators face in trying to foster a culture of academic integrity in their schools (Kidwell, Wozniak & Laurel, 2003; McCabe & Pavela, 2000). Faculty members have been surveyed (McNabb & Olmstead, 2009). Students have been surveyed (Cole, Shelley & Swartz, 2013; Miller, Shoptaugh & Wooldridge, 2011; Thakkar & Weisfeld-Spolter, 2012). In a broader discussion of the components of academic integrity, Hineman (2002) considered the intersection of ethics and academic integrity with technology, specifically with regard to the Internet and the challenges posed by student use and misuse. Studies of students’ use of technology in the classroom and online has shown a growing reliance on the internet and other Web 2.0 technologies to master course material (Cole, Swartz & Shelley, 2013). Huang and Nakazawa (2010) found that certain Web 2.0 technologies assist student learning by facilitating access to others in the course, including the instructor.
Some might argue that this is but the beginning as new technologies emerge and become integrated into the learning environment (Baggett & Williams, 2012; Greenhow, Robelia & Hughes, 2009; Kerner & Gunderson, 2012; Otte, Gold, Gorges, Smith & Stein, 2012).

How does technology impact academic integrity in online courses and in the classroom? Conflicting results have been reported when online learning platforms have been compared with traditional classroom settings. While online learning had been said to be ripe for cheating, Grijalva, Kerkvliet and Nowell (2006) found no evidence that academic dishonesty was any more pervasive online than it was in the classroom. McNabb and Olmstead’s (2009) study of faculty beliefs about academic integrity online and in the classroom had similar findings. Faculty members surveyed said that they believed that there was no difference in the amount or nature of academic dishonesty in the two environments.

Eshet, Peled, and Grinautski (2012), whose focus was on student motivation, asserted that students in classroom courses have more motivation to cheat than students in online courses. In their study of nursing students enrolled in online and classroom-based programs, Hart and Morgan (2010) found higher levels of cheating reported by the traditional RN-BSN students than by those enrolled in the online program. The authors concluded that, at least from their study, concerns about cheating being more prevalent online than on ground could not be supported. The widely-reported cheating scandal at Harvard in 2012 adds to the evidence that academic integrity on campus and in the classroom is under siege (Christakis & Christakis, 2012; Perez-Pena, 2012).

Cheating by students in online programs may not be more prevalent than cheating by students in the classroom. But, the types of cheating and access to available resources, coupled with the difficulty in monitoring off-site, online activity does heighten concern regarding student activity in that environment. Sharing information on exams that are not proctored is often cited as an issue that is difficult to address (Hollister & Berenson, 2009; Rowe, 2004). Concluding that online exams were an invitation to cheat, Harmon and Lambrinos (2008) reported on the results of their study of several economics exams, some proctored and some not. In instances that exams were not proctored or monitored, cheating occurred.

Other issues, including failure to credit another’s work, notably where research is retrieved from the internet, and making one’s own work available to others have been presented as occurring more often in the online environment than in the traditional classroom setting (Hinman, 2002). However, even here, studies have been inconclusive (Stuber-McEwen, Wisely & Hoggart, 2009).

Albers (2007) addressed what instructors might do to prevent cheating, including but not limited to on-site proctoring and, where that is not feasible, webcam surveillance and fingerprint authentication. Yet, the question remains of whether these stratagems stop cheating.

Academic dishonesty is not confined to students, as a recent report of alleged plagiarism by a longtime university law professor would indicate (Green & Wenger, 2013). However, when it comes to students who report their own cheating most often, business school students rank highest with regard to academic dishonesty. In a study of 412 business students, Baetz, Zivcakova, Wood, Nosko, De Pasquale, and Archer (2011) reported that only 7.5 per cent said that they had never cheated. Mangan (2006) reported that 56 percent of graduate business students surveyed admitted to cheating as compared with 47 percent of graduate students in other fields. McCabe, Butterfield, and Trevino (2006) found that graduate business students cheated more than their counterparts in other disciplines.

This research has focused largely on business students at one university in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Because technology is continually changing the instructional landscape, researchers wanted to understand how the integration of technology into learning affected students’ appreciation of certain behaviors traditionally related to academic integrity. The
Related Content

**Designing a Distributed Learning Experience**

**Using Eye Tracking as a Tool to Teach Informatics Students the Importance of User Centered Design**
The Impact of Authentic Learning Exercises On Pre-service Teachers’ Motivational Beliefs towards Technology Integration
[www.igi-global.com/article/the-impact-of-authentic-learning-exercises-on-pre-service-teachers-motivational-beliefs-towards-technology-integration/117277?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/the-impact-of-authentic-learning-exercises-on-pre-service-teachers-motivational-beliefs-towards-technology-integration/117277?camid=4v1a)

E-Learning and K-12
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/learning/12185?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/learning/12185?camid=4v1a)